

HYGIENE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

UNDER THE CHARGE OF

MILTON J. ROSENAU, M.D.,

PROFESSOR OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND HYGIENE, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL,
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,

AND

GEORGE W. MCCOY, M.D.,

DIRECTOR OF HYGIENIC LABORATORY, UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Lessons Taught by Measures for Control of Venereal Diseases.—PIERCE and WHITE (*Jour. Am. Med. Assn.*, 1920, lxxv, 1133) state that closer coöperation should be developed between state boards of health and the Public Health Service, and between state boards of health and local health officers to encourage a uniform method of venereal disease control throughout the United States. It adds much to the effectiveness of any public work to adopt and put into practice a uniform procedure. Uniformity impresses the fact on those that come into contact with the work that definite knowledge is possessed by health authorities. Health authorities should recognize the important part unofficial agencies may take in venereal disease control work if the activities of voluntary organizations are properly supervised. The moral, social and economic phases of venereal disease control work can be materially advanced by organizations and citizens interested in these particular problems. The results so secured will reduce the burden of the control of venereal diseases now largely borne by health officials. Progress will be materially advanced when the medical profession takes more interest in control of venereal disease than it does at the present time. Members of the medical profession should naturally assume leadership in all plans for promoting public health, and there certainly is urgent need for every physician to renew and maintain his interest in all phases of the present program for venereal disease control. Every medical college should provide better facilities for preparing future physicians to have a greater knowledge of the venereal diseases. There is need for a wider development of follow-up work in connection with treating persons infected with venereal diseases. A follow-up staff should be a part of the personnel of every venereal disease specialist. The duties of such a staff are to keep track of patients needing further treatment; to determine sources of infection; to see that precautions to prevent the spread of infections are being observed by patients; to discover other cases among the associates and members of the family of infected persons, and to carry on sociological and psychologic observations that will be of value in limiting the further spread of venereal infections. The question of equal treatment of both male and female infected persons must be placed on a scientific and equitable basis. All persons of either sex infected with either gonorrhea or syphilis are a very definite menace to the health of the community in which they reside; and unless infected individuals can be depended on to observe

precautions to prevent the spread of their infection to others, they should be placed under either modified or absolute quarantine restrictions. Careful and thoughtful consideration must be given by physicians, teachers, psychologists and intelligent parents to the question of deciding on the material to be used and the methods of applying instruction to questions of sex and venereal disease prevention. There is no phase of public health work which is attended by greater difficulties and which presents so many various aspects for consideration as does the problem of venereal disease control. Every one who has had actual experience in carrying on any part of the program has been greatly impressed with the tremendous scope and possibilities of the work and deeply realizes the necessity for not only continuing, but for greatly expanding the present plan of action. It can be stated without qualification or doubt that the great mass of intelligent citizens of the United States are deeply interested in this problem and will give their unqualified support to health officers, physicians and others attempting to meet their responsibilities for preventing the spread of venereal diseases.

An Epidemiological Study of an Endemic Focus of Leprosy.—BORN and FOX (*Public Health Reports*, 1920, xxxv, 3007) have studied leprosy in a Gulf Coast city where the disease has prevailed for about thirty years. The investigation embraces 45 cases, at least 36 of which were infected locally. Males predominated, as in other leprosy foci. The age incidence showed the second decade to furnish more cases than any other, and residence in the focus of from eighteen to twenty years prior to onset was the rule. The tuberculous and mixed types formed the large majority of the cases. It is suggested that not all cases in the focus have come under observation. It seems likely that there are several fairly well-defined foci, other parts being relatively free. Persons of German birth or parentage seem especially susceptible. A history of contact with known lepers was obtained in about half of the cases. The possibility of insect transmission is discussed, but not regarded as likely. There is no official control of leprosy in the focus.

Information Concerning Rat Surveys and Rat Proofing.—The Public Health Service (*Public Health Reports*, 1920, xxxv, 2615) in this paper considers first the disadvantage of rat infestations from the economic, commercial and sanitary points of view, which is followed by a discussion of rat surveys for the detection of plague infection. The number of rats examined should be at least 1000 for every 10,000 of the human population, and a preliminary survey should be made in order that the most promising locations shall be trapped. The rat-proofing of buildings by elevation, to prevent harboring underneath, and by the use of concrete for floors and area walls is described, and model ordinances are presented.

Biological Investigation of California Rice Fields Relative to Mosquito Breeding.—PURDY (*Public Health Reports*, 1920, xxxv, 2556) made a study of the breeding of malaria-carrying mosquitoes in rice fields in California, contrasting the findings with those secured from a similar investigation in Arkansas. The most striking difference